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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Hughes: Turkey 'Democratic,' Egypt 'Crowded' - Hurriyet
Hughes Voices Support for Turkey's EU Bid - Hurriyet
Hughes: Turks are Proud to Say 'We are All Turks' - Milliyet
Pope Benedict XVI: Peace Requires Cooperation by All -
Hurriyet
Wolfowitz: Turkey's EU Drive Positive for Europe, Region -
Vatan
Buyukanit Warns on Fundamentalism, Terror - Sabah
Istanbul Conference Breaks Turkish Taboos on Armenians -
Vatan
British Labor Party Pressures Blair to Step Down - Aksam
US Releases 1,000 Abu-Ghraib Inmates for Ramadan - Vatan
Israeli Missiles Kill Islamic Jihad Leader - Hurriyet
Al-Qaida Leader in Spain Sentenced to 27 Years - Sabah
PKK Militants Kill 2 Village Guards in Sirnak - Sabah

OPINION MAKERS

Hughes: Turkey is Like the United States - Radikal
Rehn: Turkey-EU Ties Worsening - Cumhuriyet
Talat: Greek Cypriots Turned Me into Another Denktas - Zaman
Nicosia Determined to Hold 'Nikiforos' Exercise - Radikal
US Releases 1,000 Iraqi Prisoners - Cumhuriyet
British Want to Pull Out of Iraq - Zaman
UN Steps Up International Pressure on Lebanon - Yeni Safak
HAMAS Stops, Israel Strikes - Zaman
Sheehan Detained Briefly During Rally at White House -
Radikal

BRIEFING

Hadley and Turkey: Stephen Hadley had visited Turkey on his first foreign trip as Assistant Secretary of Defense in the administration of George Bush Sr. He called on Turkey again on his first trip abroad as President's National Security Advisor, "Sabah" reports. Ties between Turkey and the US have gradually improved following the visit of Prime Minister Erdogan to the US in June. Both sides have accepted that Iraq's stabilization will not be possible without Turkey's support. Key officials in the Bush Administration know that the US will not be able to achieve its vital interests in the region without Turkish backing. The Americans have taken into consideration Turkish concerns with regard to the PKK, and are working on formulas to solve the problem, according to "Sabah." The paper also claims on its front-page that Hadley discussed a possible 'regime change' in Syria with Turkish officials during his weekend visit to Ankara.

Hughes on Turkey en Route to Cairo: Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy Karen Hughes is on a regional tour that will take her to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey in an effort to 'restore' the image of the United States abroad, Turkish papers report. Hughes responded to journalists' questions en route to Cairo. She said that Turkey is an 'important democratic country' and a 'key ally that bridges Europe and Asia.' 'Turkey's EU accession is something that we strongly support. We believe in support for Turkey. Turkey has been a key coalition partner in the global war against terror, and of course it is a key NATO ally. When I landed in Afghanistan, I was greeted at the airport by a Turkish general, because the Turkish army was securing the airport in Kabul. So they are a key ally that has been a great partner of ours,' Hughes said. She added that Turkey is a country that encompasses 'people of many different backgrounds and beliefs,' yet is proud of the saying that 'all are Turks.' 'Much as the US has assimilated people of many different backgrounds and from many different places, Turkey is very proud of its identity, under which all of its citizens consider themselves to be Turks.'

General Buyukanit on EU, Terror, Fundamentalism: Turkish Land Forces Commander General Yasar Buyukanit told the opening of the new academic year at the War Academy in Ankara yesterday that the country faced the threat of fundamentalism and the activities of the terrorist PKK that targets 'ethnic partition' of the nation. Buyukanit claimed that groups with fundamentalist aspirations long for a caliphate or sharia-oriented regime for Turkey, and warned that such groups should be prepared for their 'inevitable end.' 'Destructive and separatist activities, supported from inside and outside Turkey, will be eliminated by the dynamic forces obliged to protect the Republic,' Buyukanit stressed. The land forces commander also 'condemned' the characterization of Turkey's fight against terrorism by the EU Parliament as 'aggressive military operations.' 'I regard such expressions as a wake-up call for the Turkish Republic,' Buyukanit said.

Wolfowitz Welcomes Turkish Progress Toward EU: Turkish dailies report that World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz told a joint press availability with IMF Managing Director Rodrigo de Rato that Turkey's progress toward the EU is 'a positive development for both Turkey and Europe, as well as the whole region.' Rato, who met with State Minister Ali Babacan over the weekend, said that the IMF had always supported the opening of EU accession negotiations with Turkey.

Hatay Interfaith Conference Ends: Leaders of Turkey's non-Muslim communities told an interfaith conference on religious tolerance on Monday that they face constant prejudice from the Muslim majority in Turkey. Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I complained that his community had difficulty understanding the mentality which sees their religious activities as a 'show of force' and their visits around Turkey as 'missionary activities.' Bartholomew addressed the conference in Turkish, claiming that he had not been allowed to perform religious services during the past two years at the church of Saint Nicholas in the Mediterranean town of Demre. Bartholomew noted that the presence of the Greek Orthodox Church in Turkey makes the country an 'important bridge between religions and civilizations, as well as between east and west.' The spiritual leader of the Turkish Armenian community, Patriarch Mesrob II, voiced similar complaints, appealing for 'greater understanding and empathy' from the Turks. The leader of the Jewish minority, Rabbi Ishak Haleva, said that many indications showed that civilization is inclined to destroy itself today: 'Every year, some six million children around the world die of malnutrition before they reach the age of five. Theft, robbery, rape, and other criminal and immoral activities have become widespread. Drug traffickers are looking for young customers among primary school children. And what are civilized countries doing? They are spending 100 million dollars on tanks, artillery units, rifles and ammunition every hour. If this is civilization, we can do without it. Civilization is committing suicide.' The head of the Turkish Religious Affairs Directorate, Professor Ali Bardakoglu, said that religions play an important role in establishing peace, love, and friendship. 'Love, tolerance, and peace are the essence of Islam. Islam never permits terror,' Bardakoglu said. Armenian Conference Ends in Istanbul: A conference on the suffering of Armenians during the last days of the Ottoman Empire wrapped up yesterday. On its second day, the conference was protested by a small group of nationalists who threw eggs and tomatoes at the university building, some of them protesting against an EU flag hoisted beside the Turkish flag in front of the conference venue. A total of 786 guests were invited to the conference, and about 300 participants attended the 12 sessions held during the two-day gathering. The talks were covered by scores of domestic and foreign reporters, including two journalists coming from Armenia. Professor Tosun Terzioğlu, President of Sabanci University, said that the Armenian conference had been an important event in showing that universities in Turkey were independent and that academics and thinkers could freely debate diverse opinions.

Dogan Media Group Buys Star-TV: On Monday, Turkey's first private TV channel established in 1990, "Star TV," was auctioned. "Star TV," in state receivership since last year after the authorities seized dozens of companies from the now-defunct Uzan business conglomerate following a bank scandal and corruption charges, was sold to the Dogan media group for 306.5 million USD. "Yeni Safak" says on its front page that the transaction increased the Dogan Group's viewer ratings as well as its share in the advertisement market. A commentary in the paper warns that the Dogan Media Group has taken a major step toward dominating the media by purchasing "Star-TV," adding that the tender will have implications for Turkish politics. It calls on the Parliament to take measures to prevent the monopolization of Turkish media by the Dogan Group. The sale of the state-seized companies of the Uzan family kicked off last week with "Super FM" and "Metro FM" radio stations to the Canadian CGS Group.

(CanWest.)

Iraq-Turkey Oil Pipeline Bombed: Insurgents bombed a junction on Iraq's crude oil export pipeline near Kirkuk and briefly detained nine employees of the facility over the weekend, wire services reported Monday. The sabotage is expected to delay efforts to resume Iraqi oil exports to Turkey, which had been brought to a standstill by the bombing attacks.

PKK Trains 400 Bombers in the Kandil Mountains: "Zaman" reports on an intelligence report by Turkish security which claims that the PKK is training some 400 militants in the Kandil Mountains to carry out bomb attacks in the southeastern provinces in an effort to block Turkey from joining the European Union. The report says that the terrorist organization is planning to send some 150 militants to Turkey from northern Iraq.

Police Arrest PKK Members, Seize Weapons: Police arrested three members of the outlawed PKK in the town of Nusaybin in southeast Turkey, seizing arms and munitions. Security forces seized 4,500 AK-47 rifle (Kalashnikov) bullets during a separate operation in Siverek near the southeastern city of Sanliurfa. Two village guards were killed in an armed attack by PKK rebels against a military unit checking road security on the Sirnak-Hakkari motorway. The terrorists escaped after the attack. Meanwhile, police arrested yesterday a female PKK terrorist on charges of planning a bomb attack against security forces in Diyarbakir, and seized 2.2 kilograms of explosives, revolvers, mobile phones and bullet cartridges.

EDITORIAL OPINION: US/Turkey/Middle East

"Regime Change Scenarios for Syria"

Asli Aydintasbas noted in the mass appeal "Sabah" (9/27): "The expectation in Washington, as well as in international circles, is that as the result of the ongoing Hariri investigation, regime change in Syria is an increasingly likely possibility. The Bush administration views Assad as a weak leader, and does not see any progress by the regime regarding security and democratization issues. Ankara and other Western capitals have started discussing possible names to replace Assad. This issue was brought up during National Security Advisor Stephan Hadley's recent visit to Ankara as well. . Ankara worries about possible chaos in the event of a regime change in Syria, even if it comes about through the UN investigation. On the other hand, the Turkish government does not intend to continue to play a 'big brother' role for the Assad administration any longer. But Ankara does not want to see instability in Syria similar to what we have seen in Iraq. Moreover, Ankara wants to see tangible evidence from the UN investigation if it points to Syrian complicity. This message was also conveyed to Hadley."

"Strategic Partnership?"

Uluc Gurkan argued in the tabloid "Star" (9/27): "Given the fact that National Security Advisor Hadley made his first tour abroad to Turkey, the Hadley visit was a very important event. During the visit, Hadley conveyed President Bush's message about forgetting the past and reestablishing the strategic partnership. When Turkish authorities asked about the PKK, Hadley confirmed that the issue is covered by the strategic partnership as well. The meaning of this message is very clear. The US wants Turkey to accept and assume the role designed for it within the Broader Middle East Initiative. The message also indicates that meeting this expectation is the only way to eliminate the PKK threat in northern Iraq. . Turkey is now being dragged into an adventure that will result in a redesign of the Middle East map. It is vitally important that Turkey stand on its own feet instead of fooling itself with carrots, such as possible US action on the PKK issue. Any adventure taken with the US will bring nothing but lost lives, blood, and a threat to our territorial integrity."

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